

Seth Freeman, Resident of West Hartford, 4Cs SEIU 1973

Testimony in Support of HB 6616 - An Act Concerning the Expansion of Husky Health Benefits to Those Ineligible Due to Immigration Status.

Dear Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest, and members of the Human Services Committee. My name is Seth Freeman and I live in West Hartford. I strongly support HB 6616 to expand access to the HUSKY program to undocumented people in CT up to the age of 26.

I am a proud member of Recovery For All – a statewide coalition of community, faith, and labor organizations. I am also current President of 4Cs – Congress of CT Community Colleges – a union representing approximately 4,000 faculty and staff across our community colleges and PT faculty at the University of Hartford.

I support HB 6616, because first and foremost, health care is a human right. Every human being regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, income level, or immigration status should have access to quality health care.

I also support HB 6616 as a community college educator. Undocumented students overwhelmingly rely on public colleges and universities to obtain their education.

- 81% of undocumented students are enrolled in public institutions while 19% attend private institutions.
- Furthermore, the majority of undocumented students begin their higher education journey at community colleges.

Providing Husky for Immigrants will significantly help students that attend our public colleges and universities. Passing the bill as written, **to cover individuals up to the age of 26**, is very important to us. This will ensure coverage for more of our population of students we serve in our public colleges and universities.

Providing access to health care for undocumented families is the right thing to do and the just thing to do. It will make our entire population healthier, which is beneficial to every resident in our state, and beneficial to our economy. But most of all it is beneficial to the individuals and families who are unnecessarily sick, dying, and facing hardship, due to lack of health care.

There is support for Husky For All in our state right now, where 57% of CT Voters' Support Husky For All Immigrants.

As the wealthiest state in the country, CT should lead the way and be an example for the rest of the country. We should show by our actions that we value every human being the same, regardless of whether they have documentation or not.

As a member of the Recovery For All coalition, we are fighting for a more equitable CT, where families don't have to die from lack of health care, or suffer financial hardship due to lack of health insurance.

I support HB 6616 and hope the committee will vote in favor. In the future, I urge this committee to continue working to expand HUSKY access to all immigrant people, regardless of age or immigration status.

Thank you committee members for your hard work and for your service to our state.

Seth Freeman,
President of 4Cs – Congress of CT Community Colleges
West Hartford CT